



George Frideric Handel

AMADIGI DI GAULA

*with The English Concert
conducted by Erin Helyard*

AMADIGI DI GAULA

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Based on Amadis de Grèce, a French tragédie-lyrique by André Cardinal

Destouches and Antoine Houdar de la Motte

Sung in Italian with English side-titles

A Buxton International Festival production, featuring The English Concert.

📅 DATES AND TIMES

Sunday 12 July	2pm
Thursday 16 July	7.15pm
Monday 20 July	7.15pm

🏛️ VENUE

Buxton Opera House

🕒 DURATION

2 hours and 45 minutes, including a 20-minute interval

CREATIVES

Erin Helyard
Olivia Fuchs
Eleanor Bull
Ben Pickersgill

Conductor
Director
Designer
Lighting Designer

CAST

Jake Ingbar
Rowan Pierce
Hilary Cronin
James Hall

Amadigi
Oriana
Melissa
Dardano

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Nadja Zwiener (leader), Annie Gard, Cristina Prats Costa, Mark Seow, Sara Deborah Struntz

Violin II

Manami Mizumoto, Anna Curzon, Rebecca Bell, George Clifford

Viola

Jordan Potter, George White

Violoncello

Joseph Crouch, Samuel Ng

Double bass

Jan Zahourek

Theorbo

Sergio Bucheli

Oboe/Recorder

Clara Espinosa Encinas, Grace Scott Deuchar

Bassoon

Catriona McDermid

Trumpet

Mark Bennett

Harpsichord

Tom Foster

OPERA TALKS

For evening performances at 6pm
in the Opera House

For the matinee performance at 12.45pm
in the Opera House

The production of Amadigi di Gaula has been made possible by the generous support of George and Daphne Burnett.





SYNOPSIS

Part I

Amadigi and Dardano are captive on Melissa's magic island of love. Amadigi tells Dardano of his plan to escape and, when questioned why he doesn't return Melissa's affections, he confesses that he is in love with Oriana. Dardano is upset as he too is in love with her and he leaves to tell Melissa of Amadigi's planned escape with Oriana.

Amadigi waits for night to settle so he can carry out his plan but he is interrupted by Melissa. She tries to persuade him to stay. When he refuses, she vows to take revenge but then realises she cannot hurt the man she loves.

Amadigi has to face a trial of fire in order to free Oriana. Dardano stops him and tells him that he too is in love with Oriana. In the knowledge that Oriana reciprocates his love, Amadigi leaves Dardano and succeeds in passing through the fire while Dardano cannot follow.

Amadigi frees Oriana and they share a moment of happiness before Melissa rushes in to separate them. Unable to beguile Amadigi, Melissa drugs him, which leads to him hallucinating and seeing a vision of Oriana and Dardano kissing. He passes out.

Melissa ensures that Oriana finds the lifeless Amadigi. Fearing he has died, Oriana contemplates killing herself, but then Amadigi revives only to accuse her of infidelity. Oriana leaves, desperate and hurt, and Amadigi tries to kill himself. Melissa saves him but when he still refuses to stay with her she decides to torture him and Oriana.

Part II

Dardano is suffering from a broken heart when Melissa arrives suggesting she transform Dardano into Amadigi so he can win Oriana. Dardano goes ahead with Melissa's plan and Oriana is convinced that he is Amadigi. However, unable to resist annihilating his rival once and for all, Dardano runs off to fight Amadigi but loses. Furious that her plan has failed, Melissa tells Oriana of her deceit and then threatens her. Oriana remains defiant.

Melissa then decides to torture both Amadigi and Oriana. Although she tries to break them, they remain strong under pressure, each one pleading for the other to be released. Melissa then calls on Dardano to back her up, yet he refuses to take her side. Furious, Melissa wants to destroy Oriana but she finds she cannot go through with it. She is losing her power and decides to die leaving the lovers behind reunited.

See p47 for Christopher Webber's article on opera sorceresses, 'The Saving Sorceress'.



Erin Helyard

Conductor

Erin Helyard is a conductor, performer of the harpsichord and fortepiano, and published musicologist. He graduated from the Sydney Conservatorium with the University Medal, later completing a PhD at McGill University. He has appeared with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Musica Viva, and the Australian String Quartet, and conducted major symphony

orchestras across Australia, as well as Opera Australia and the Adelaide Festival. As Artistic Director and co-founder of Pinchgut Opera and the Orchestra of the Antipodes, Erin has forged a distinctive vision for baroque and classical opera in Australia. His productions have won multiple awards, including an International Opera Award. He appears courtesy of Pinchgut Opera.



Olivia Fuchs

Director

Olivia is an international opera director. With *Death in Venice* (WNO) she won the 2024 SkyArts, UK Theatre and Royal Philharmonic Society awards for opera. For *Rusalka* (Opera Australia) she received the 2007 Green Room and Helpmann Awards. Other notable productions: *Eugene Onegin* (Karlsruhe); *The Makropulos Affair* (WNO & Scottish Opera), *Der*

Rosenkavalier (WNO); *Susanna*, *Falstaff*, *Rusalka*, *Don Giovanni* (Opera North); *La traviata* (Irish National Opera); *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Teatro Colón); *The Marriage of Figaro* (ENO); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (RBO). She has worked in Germany, Denmark, France, Spain, Australia and Argentina.



Eleanor Bull

Designer

Eleanor Bull is a Set & Costume Designer based in London. In 2017 she won the Linbury Prize for Stage Design for her work with Phoenix Dance Theatre. In 2020 she was nominated by The Globe Theatre for The Evening Standard Future Theatre Award. She trained at

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, graduating with an MA in *Theatre Design* in 2017, and at The Arts University Bournemouth, graduating with a First Class BA(Hons) in *Costume with Performance Design* in 2013.



Ben Pickersgill

Lighting Designer

Recent lighting designs include *Don Quichotte* (Opéra de Lausanne), *Rodelinda*, *Fidelio* (Garsington Opera), *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* (Greek National Opera), *The Merry Widow*, *Il Trittico* (Scottish Opera), *Falstaff*, *La Rondine*, *Trouble in Tahiti* (Opera North), *Odyssey: A Heroic Pantomime* (Jermyn Street Theatre)

and *A Christmas Carol* (Theatre by the Lake). As associate Lighting Designer, projects include *Macbeth* (Palau de les Arts, Valencia), *The Inheritance* (West End and Broadway), *The Lehman Trilogy* (West End) and *Elizabeth* (Royal Ballet).



Jake Ingbar

Amadigi (Countertenor)

In the 2025-26 season, American countertenor Jake Ingbar makes debuts with English National Opera as Armindo *Partenope* (London Handel Festival), as Andronico *Tamerlano*, as soloist in *St John's Passion*, and at the Buxton International Festival in the title role of *Amadigi di Gaula*. Recent highlights include

debuts with Nederlandse Reisopera singing Ottone *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, as the Witch of Endor *Saul* (Semperoper Dresden), as Nireno *Giulio Cesare* (Salzburger Festspiele & Dutch National Opera), as well as covering Countertenor 2 *El Niño* (The Metropolitan Opera).



Rowan Pierce

Oriana (Soprano)

Rowan Pierce, a former Rising Star of the OAE, Harewood Artist at ENO, is a Samling Artist and appears with ensembles including the Dunedin Consort, Rotterdam Philharmonic and Florilegium. Recent roles include Oberto *Alcina* (Glyndebourne, Staatstheater Stuttgart), Papagena *The Magic Flute* (ROH) and

Dede *A Quiet Place* (Linbury Theatre), Quivera *The Indian Queen* (Opera de Lille, Opera du Caen, Opera du Luxembourg), Barbarina *Le nozze di Figaro* (Grange Festival, ENO, Nevill Holt Opera) and Galatea (Vache Baroque Festival).



Hilary Cronin

Melissa (Soprano)

Hilary Cronin won both the First Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2021 London Handel International Singing Competition. Selected as a 'Rising Star' by BBC Music Magazine, she has since collaborated with prominent

national and international conductors. She made her BBC Proms debut in 2025 singing Handel's *Alexander's Feast* with the Irish Baroque Orchestra conducted by Peter Whelan.



James Hall

Dardano (Alto/Countertenor)

James Hall's recent projects include Joacim *Susanna* (Opera North). Past engagements include Bayerische Staatsoper München, Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Glyndebourne Festival, and concerts with the

Monteverdi Choir, The English Concert, the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Dunedin Consort, in venues including Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, Royal Festival Hall, the Palace of Versailles, the Venice Biennale and Wiener Konzerthaus.